

Cambodian farmers learn natural farming in India

Karnataka, India — Farmers and researcher representatives from 12 countries paid a 4-day field visit plus a one-day reflection workshop in Karnataka state, south of India, in order to get exposure to ideas and experiences based on food sovereignty.

The event hosted by Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS) in cooperation with La Via Campesina (LVC) from November 2-6, 2011. The participants learned vast experiences from the Indian farmers regarding food sovereignty through application of a method of Zero Budget Natural Farming and also exchanged experiences with other participating countries.

Farmer leaders from 9 national level organizations in South and Southeast Asia, as well as 3 partner countries (researchers) from Latin America, Europe and North America shared their experiences and analysis of common issues and challenges that the farmers face and came up with some recommendations for the farmers, governments, inter-government bodies, and civil society organizations.

Among those participating countries included were India, Indonesia, Cambodia, Philippines, Thailand, South Korea, Timor Leste, Srilanka, Nepal, Mexico, Scotland and Canada.

Ms. Chey Siyat, FNN provincial chairperson of Kampot, and Mr. Pan Sopheap, FNN Director, participated in the exposure visit.

During the visit the participants learned new experiences as follows:

1. Philosophy and concept of the Zero Budget Natural Farming.
2. Methods of making liquid compost “Jeevamrutha”.
3. How human beings, plants, creatures and soil have mutually been reacted and inter-reacted to assure and guarantee a cycle of life.
4. Natural farming is very meaningful for the health of humans, soil, plants, and the environment.
5. Application of multi-purpose farms and drip water system are effective for small farmers to live sustainably.
6. The earth and the environment are considered as our mother and lives. If we destroy the earth and environment, that means we destroy our mother and ourselves.
7. The Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) method means farmers are free from using chemical fertilizers/pesticides, external inputs, and spend less on labor and water.
8. The most important interpretation is that ZBNF enables farmers to be free from being a slave to their own rice fields and labors. So, the farmers will become more independent and self-reliant key actors in terms of food security and food sovereignty.
9. The Seed Bank, or known as Gene Bank, is also extremely important for farmers to free themselves from slavery of the neo-imperialism.

Ms. Chey Siyat, during and after the visit, expressed her impression that the natural farming techniques that Indian farmers have been applying is the same method and process of Organic/Ecological Farming that FNN members have applied. However, she added that the visit enriched her knowledge about how human beings and nature can communicate through deep investigation and observation. She praised some of the host farmers who have succeeded

themselves through the method of ZBNF. She has promised to apply some of the learned experiences and will also replicate them to show to her members.

However, we did not learn about the saving and credit cooperative, as this is what FNN members have been applying. So, we hope to that we can learn more and can share among one another in the future.

In recent decades, health problems, environment issues, soil depletion, and climates changes have become the hottest issues and are given the most consideration. Just in recent years, more countries and institutions have put their consideration and efforts into the natural and organic farming systems. Up to date, many national and international companies actively sell their agricultural products, especially the fertilizers, with logos and brand names such as NATURAL CHEMICAL FERTILIZERS, because they clearly understand the needs of the farmers and customers. However, they are very actively advertising and promoting in a dishonest manner. Most of the farmers and customers getting confused and have tried these new products (realizing that they were not all natural or organic later).

Overall, in order to promote food security and food sovereignty, and especially to free themselves from being a slave on their own rice fields, small farmers must be committed to quitting using chemical fertilizers and pesticides. They have to maximize and effectively use their own local resources and inputs.



Natural/organic food is meaningful to our lives and is nature friendly. Organic food especially reflects a responsibility of producers for themselves and for customers